



THINK PINK Karen Legan of Lemon Dahlia arranges a stunning floral display for an outdoor wedding reception.



Eventful

A GUIDE TO SHAPING THE PERFECT SOIREE // BY LAURA NOBLE PERESE

»» THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING marks much-awaited milestones like graduations proms, weddings, garden parties, and more. No matter the occasion, the entertaining season is in full bloom.

On Flowers / Karen Legan, founder and owner of the innovative local floral design firm, Lemon Dahlia, understands the power of flowers at any event, big or small, and brings new life to her stems in the form of gorgeous and truly unique designs. “For summertime around the pool, I’d throw some buds and blooms into the water for a burst of color,” she muses when contemplating ways to add beauty to a backyard barbecue.

“For entertaining outside on the patio, I’d keep it light and fresh,” she says. “Farm to table is my motto with flowers. I try to stay as true to my garden as I can.”

Legan believes that flowers should add just the right touch to a table setting. Lemon Dahlia is known for its tasteful signature of perfectly imperfect combinations, even mixing fruits and vegetables from the garden into some arrangements.

In May and June, Legan favors playing with the flowers that are in season—like sweet peas, tulips, grape hyacinth, anemone and hellebores. (Lemon Dahlia’s namesake and celebrated rare breed of dahlias bloom a little later in the summer.)

On Ambiance / Shiran Nicholson, an international event planner based in Fairfield County, believes flowers are an integral part of any event. Flowers as living walls, as chandeliers, as photo booth backgrounds, as hair design for a bride, and even for adding a splash of color with flowers in the drinks can add a lot.

“A good party addresses all the senses without

many memorable moments.

“The more people enjoy a party, the better,” says Nicholson of his creative additions to gatherings both big and small. A few of his team’s favorite vibe-enhancing additions include GIF-generating photo booths, secret dance parties utilizing wireless headphones that transmit up to three channels of music, sleek light up bars and tables,

events for Tim LaBant Catering and Events, better known to some as the catering arm of The Schoolhouse at Cannondale. When it comes to high-quality party dining, she wrote the proverbial book.

“The traditional cocktail party is making a comeback in the sense that you don’t have to break the bank to entertain, and the model allows you to do it a few times a year rather than just once,” says Thorpe. “The host goes with a two-hour time frame, has thoughtful food that is just enough for everyone to feel satisfied, an interesting bar, and a great playlist.”

When it comes to the menu, she says people are really enjoying the concept of the mini meal: a double old-fashioned glass filled with a few simple made-to-order layers of delicious and inspired bites. Think Israeli couscous topped with grilled halibut and mango relish; a spicy coleslaw with cabbage and apricots, topped with honey tahini and grilled chicken; or a bite of polenta topped with pork belly and maple-roasted carrots.

“What makes a great party is a perfect mix of inspired food, music that blends in but is interesting, decor that sets the mood, and great beverages, both alcoholic and non,” says Thorpe. “Be thoughtful.”

special elements like online trivia games, and old school games like air hockey for six players instead of two.

“Games aren’t just for kids,” asserts Nicholson. “Even adults love to gather around a game table at a party.”

On Food / Whatever the age of the guests, food also factors into a successful celebration and for that, Rebecca Thorpe has the town covered. She’s director of



SERVE MINI MEALS Delicious bites in a glass.

overwhelming them,” says Nicholson who is known for transforming spaces from functional to fantastic for any function. Nicholson’s philosophy is that entertaining is all about making people happy.

Whether a bar or bat mitzvah, a wedding, anniversary, or a large group event like the Ridgefield Independent Film Festival’s Oscar Party Gala at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Nicholson-planned events feature



Pro Party

It’s normal to feel a little unsure about throwing a party. Experts Karen Legan of Lemon Dahlia, Shiran Nicholson of Nicholson Events, and Rebecca Thorpe of Tim LaBant Catering share their top tips.

» **RAIN DELAY** Don’t be shy about having a rain date.

» **THEME PARTY** The time has come around again to try a themed event—be creative.

» **SENSE-IBLE** Address all the senses without overwhelming them: good music, lighting, flowers and food.

» **SURPRISE** Have fun with your flowers and don’t take them too seriously. Always incorporate something surprising and special.

» **EAT UP** Try planting some edible flowers like pansies or nasturtium with your potted herbs. They add beauty as a colorful garnish.

» **MORE** Add flowers. All the time. To everything.

—LAURA NOBLE PERESE



May I? Maybe not.

A number of cultures view the month of May as an inauspicious time for marriage, hence the saying “Marry in May and you’ll rue the day.”



Thanks Dad!

Over 77 million cards are purchased for Father’s Day. Neckties are the most popular gift for Dad, and it’s the busiest day for collect phone calls. Still!



Al Fresco Dining

It’s finally warm. Why not head out to Cactus Rose, Craft 14, Portofino’s, Marly’s, Wilton Pizza, or the Schoolhouse at Cannondale to enjoy al fresco dining?